

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 /049 W

----- 019362

R 240903Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2530

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 12685

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ETEL, PINR, NI, US

SUBJ: FMG REQUESTS FBIS WITHDRAWAL

1. AT MEETING TODAY WITH MEA DEPUTY PERMSEC DOVE-EDWIN AT LATTER'S REQUEST, DOVE-EDWIN TOLD ME HE WAS INSTRUCTED REQUEST WITHDRAWAL OF FBIS STATION AT KADUNA. HE SAID FMG WANTED WITHDRAWAL TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN FOUR-MONTH PERIOD.
2. I ASKED WHETHER HE COULD GIVE ME ANY REASONS FOR THE REQUEST. HE CITED SPORADIC PRESS REPORTS OVER RECENT MONTHS IMPUTING SINISTER IMPLICATIONS TO THIS INSTALLATION. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN GIVEN NO PRECISE REASONS, HOWEVER, AND HAD SEEN ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE "MINUTES OF THE MEETING" AT WHICH THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE. I ASKED WHETHER IT WAS THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL THAT HAD MADE THE DECISION. HE NODDED, THEN ADDED "IT WAS A HIGH LEVEL DECISION."
3. I SAID I HOPED I COULD BE ASSURED THAT THE FMG CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF THE FBIS OPERATION. I EXPLAINED THAT THE WORK OF THE FBIS WAS PUBLIC, THAT THE KADUNA INSTALLATION CONSISTED OF A RECEIVER THAT MONITORED PUBLIC BROADCASTS, THAT DIGESTS OF THE INFORMATION WERE FREELY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC, THAT THE STATION HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES, AND THAT IT WAS KNOWN TO BE OPEN FOR VISITS UPON REQUEST. I SAID
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I HAD MADE THESE POINTS MYSELF IN A RADIO INTERVIEW IN KADUNA

LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AGO (LAGOS 12434). DOVE-EDWIN ASSURED ME THAT THE FMG FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE LEGITIMACY AND INNOCENCE OF THE INSTALLATION, STATING THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY AWARE THAT SOME OF ITS PRODUCT HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN MEA. HE COULD ONLY SURMISE THAT THE REQUEST WAS MOTIVATED BY FMG DISINCLINATION TO FACE POSSIBLE NEED OF EXPLAINING WHY IT PERMITTED CONTINUED FBIS OPERATION IN NIGERIA.

4. I TOLD DOVE-EDWIN WE WOULD WANT A FORMAL NOTIFICATION OF FMG'S REQUEST. HE THEN SHOWED ME A DRAFT TEXT OF AIDE MEMOIRE, WHICH I SUGGESTED HE SEND ME UNDER COVER OF OFFICIAL MEA TRANSMITTAL. I SAID I APPRECIATED LEEWAY PROVIDED BY FOUR-MONTH WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE. HE REPLIED THAT IF WE NEEDED "AN ADDITIONAL MONTH OR SO," THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT TIMING OF FMG REQUEST MAY RELATE TO INCREASING PUBLICITY ON CIA ROLE IN ANGOLA AND DESIRE TO BE IN POSITION RESPOND TO ANTICIPATED NEW PUBLIC PROTEST AGAINST FBIS. ACTUAL TIMING OF WITHDRAWAL IS OF LESS IMPORTANCE TO FMG THAN BEING ABLE TO STATE THAT US HAS ACCEPTED FMG DECISION TO CLOSE IT DOWN. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, WE HAVE SEEN THIS COMING FOR SOME TIME AND HAVE ENCOURAGED FBIS PLANNING FOR THIS CONTINGENCY. WE RECOMMEND PROMPT WITHDRAWAL WITHIN FOUR-MONTH PERIOD.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, CLOSURE OF OFFICES, RADIO BROADCASTING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LAGOS12685
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750447-0053
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751212/aaaaakah.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FMG REQUESTS FBIS WITHDRAWAL
TAGS: PFOR, ETEL, PINR, NI, US, FBIS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006